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PRESS RELEASE

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MUKHTAR AL-BAKRI SENTENCED FOR PROVIDING
MATERIAL SUPPORT TO AL QAEDA

U.S. Attorney Michael A. Battle announced today that U.S. District Court Judge William M. Skretny today sentenced Mukhtar al-Bakri, to ten years in prison, three years supervised release, and fined \$2,000 on a charge of providing material support to the al Qaeda terrorist organization. Al-Bakri had pleaded guilty to the material support charge in May of 2003.

Al-Bakri was one of six defendants known as the "Lackawanna Six". Mr. al-Bakri and his codefendants had been charged initially in a two-count indictment with providing material support or resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization, based on their attendance at an al Qaeda-affiliated training camp. Al-Bakri pleaded guilty to Count Two of the indictment, a violation of 18 U.S.C. 2339B, and admitted that he provided material support to al Qaeda by traveling to the al Farooq training camp near Kandahar, Afghanistan, receiving weapons, explosives, tactical, and other training, and by providing guard duty while at the training camp. He also admitted obtaining a uniform and meeting with Usama bin Laden while at the al Farooq camp.

In addition to Al-Bakri, the five other charged defendants have also been convicted through guilty pleas and are cooperating with the government's ongoing investigation. All six defendants are scheduled to be sentenced before the end of this year. A seventh defendant, Jaber Elbaneh, of Lackawanna, New York, remains at large.

Al-Bakri admitted in court that he, along with co-defendants Shafal Mosed, Faysal Galab, Yayha Goba, Yasein Taher, Sahim Alwan and others, agreed in April 2001 to attend a military-type training camp in Afghanistan to receive training for jihad.

In his admission, al-Bakri stated that he, Alwan, Goba and another man left New York on May 12, 2001, and arrived in Karachi, Pakistan the next day. On al-Bakri's second day in Pakistan, he was told that he was going to the al Farooq camp, and that he was going to meet the "most wanted" at the camp – a reference he knew meant bin Laden, according to his admission in court. Al-Bakri and Goba then traveled to a guest house in Kandahar associated with al Qaeda, where al-Bakri viewed videotapes which contained footage concerning the bombing of the *USS Cole* and speeches by bin Laden. It was at the guest house that al-Bakri obtained a uniform to be worn at al Farooq, according to the plea agreement.

Al-Bakri admitted that he traveled to al Farooq with Goba and others, and over a period of several weeks, he worked under the direction and control of members of the al

Qaeda organization. Al-Bakri admitted receiving, among other things, training and instruction in the assembly and use of firearms, including a Kalishnikov rifle, 9mm handgun, M16 automatic rifle, and rocket-propelled grenade launcher. Al-Bakri was also required to perform guard duty at the camp. Mr. al-Bakri also received training on the use of explosives – including plastic explosives, TNT, detonators, landmines and Molotov cocktails – and in concealment and camouflage techniques.

Al Bakri's plea stated that while all the defendants named in the indictment and other individuals were at al Farooq, bin Laden appeared there and spoke about the alliance of al Qaeda and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, and threatened America and Israel. Al-Bakri also admitted meeting personally with bin Laden while both were at the camp, and that trainers at the camp spoke about the Tanzania Embassy bombing, the intention of al Qaeda to attack the United States, and the request of trainees to volunteer for suicide missions.

Al-Bakri stated that he left the al Farooq camp after completing the training, eventually returning to Lackawanna, N.Y., on or about Aug. 11, 2001.

The charge al-Bakri pleaded guilty to prohibits anyone from knowingly providing or conspiring to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization, as designated by the State Department. Al Qaeda was first designated an FTO in October 1999; that two-year designation was renewed in October 2001. As of Mr. al-Bakri's attendance at the camp, al Qaeda and bin Ladin had already been publicly identified as

perpetrators of the attack upon the USS Cole in October, 2000, in which 17 sailors were killed, and attacks upon American embassies in Africa in 1998, during which 263 people were killed and 5,000 people were wounded.

Assistant U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr., the Office's Chief of the Anti-Terrorism Unit who served as lead prosecutor in the case, stated that since entering his guilty plea, al-Bakri has been actively cooperating with the United States Government. The information obtained from al-Bakri to this point has included details as to the recruitment, training, and tactical methods of al Qaeda, and been deemed valuable by the Government in its continuing efforts to prevent, deter, and prosecute those who would wish to harm America through acts of terrorism.

Mr. Battle stated that this prosecution demonstrates that the American Government will pursue every lead in order to prevent future acts of terrorism. Mr. Battle further assured the public that his Office stands ready to assist in this effort by using the full resources of his Office to investigate and prosecute terrorism matters. Mr. Battle noted that the Lackawanna Six prosecution has already been recognized as a model of how to prosecute similar terrorism cases across the nation.

The Lackawanna Six case was prosecuted by the Office, in consultation with the Counterterrorism Section at the Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice. The investigation was conducted by the FBI in coordination with the Joint Terrorism Task Force and other federal, state and local law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

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